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IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

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CRM-M-20365-2026
Decided on : 17.04.2026

Sukhbir Singh

. . . Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab

. . . Respondents

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SANJAY VASHISTH

PRESENT: Mr. Harpal Singh Sidhu, Advocate for the petitioner.

Mr. Neeraj Madaan, Sr. DAG, Punjab.

SANJAY VASHISTH, J. (Oral)

1. By way of present petition filed under Section 528 of BNSS petitioner is seeking quashing of order dated 01.07.2025(Annexure P-3), passed by learned Additional Sessions Judge Moga, whereby the petitioner has been declared as proclaimed Person/offender in case FIR No. 74 dated 09.04.2020, under Sections 379-B, 411 and 188 IPC, Section 51-B of Disaster Management Act, 2005 and Section 25 of Arms Act, 1959, registered at Police Station Dharmkot, District Moga.

2. Learned counsel for the petitioner submits that petitioner was falsely implicated in FIR No. 74 and was thereafter granted regular bail vide order dated 15.06.2020 (P-2). It is further submitted that after grant of bail, the petitioner had shifted his residence from Baghapurana, District Moga to Ludhiana, due to which he could not receive subsequent court process, including summons, bailable warrants, or non-bailable warrants, if any issued by the learned Trial Court. Consequently, petitioner remained unaware of the proceedings and could not appear before the Court, resulting in his being declared as a Proclaimed Person/Offender vide impugned order dated 01.07.2025. Counsel further submits that petitioner never had any intention to evade the legal process or disrespect the orders of the Court and was



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unaware of the pendency of the present case at the relevant time.

It is also submitted that co-accused namely Manmeet Singh and Sukhpreet Singh have already faced trial and have been acquitted by the learned Trial Court vide judgment dated 29.01.2026, which further supports the petitioner's case.

3. Learned counsel for the petitioner contends that after petitioner was declared a proclaimed person, no further action has been taken, including the registration of any FIR under Section 209 of the BNS (corresponding to Section 174-A IPC).

Petitioner being declared a Proclaimed Person/offender, apprehends his arrest. He is, however, ready and willing to surrender before the learned Trial Court and join the proceedings in the aforesaid case to facilitate its early conclusion. Petitioner undertakes to fully cooperate with the trial proceedings.

Learned counsel further submits that the petitioner's absence before the learned Trial Court was neither intentional nor deliberate, but solely due to the reasons explained hereinabove.

4. He further contends that, if one more opportunity is afforded to the petitioner to appear by granting some protection from arrest, he undertakes that in all the future proceedings of the present case, he would never be absent from the Court, except by obtaining prior permission from the Court, and thus will fully cooperate in the Court proceedings for early completion of trial.

5. Notice of motion.

6. On asking of the Court, Mr. Neeraj Madaan, Sr. DAG, Punjab, who is present in Court, accepts notice on behalf of the respondent/State.

A copy of the complete paper book has been supplied to him by



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learned counsel for the petitioner.

7. Learned State counsel opposes the request of the petitioner, and submits that petitioner has willfully remained absent from the proceedings of learned Trial Court and thus, does not deserve any sympathy. Therefore, petitioner should be directed to surrender before the Court and to face trial.

8. I have heard learned counsel for the parties and perused the relevant material on record. It is evident that petitioner is inclined to join the process of law, and by way of present petition, he is seeking one chance to join the proceedings before the learned Trial Court, by abiding to the terms and conditions.

9. In number of cases, wherein, accused stopped appearing in criminal cases, the Courts are compelled to declare accused as 'Proclaimed Person/Proclaimed Offender'. After examining the facts, this Court has formulated a uniform method to ensure the presence of accused before the concerned Court, to enable it to proceed further instead of delaying the proceedings by awaiting the presence of accused.

Intentional or unintentional default of the accused can be dealt with by examining the facts from case to case involved, and where it is realized that absence or prolonged absence of such accused is intentional to evade the process of law, he/she can be penalized examining the nature of crime in which he is facing the proceedings and thereupon by imposing some cost amount subject to his/her capacity to pay.

Primary object of every Court is only to examine the commission of crime in question before it *vis a vis* the person/accused, who is subjected to such proceedings, and if possible justice be imparted at the earliest without unnecessary delay. It is not expected that undue time would



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be devoted in securing the presence of absconded accused and also to waste energy by enforcing the special mechanism to arrest such accused.

Considering all such aspects, this Court in the case of ***Ashish Kumar Honda @ Ashish Handa Vs. State of Punjab, 2022 (4) RCR (criminal) 765; Law Finder Doc Id # 20238111*** considered similar plea of appearance, expressed at the instance of the accused, who failed to appear before the Court at appropriate time, and observed that:

“paramount consideration of the Court is to secure presence of accused on each and every date for speeding up the trial for its final conclusion. Already Courts are flooded with so much litigation, resulting in slow pace of work, because of more than one reason. The required energy and manpower be used for expediting the proceedings of the Court, instead of running after the accused persons to get hold of them.”

Again, this Court has considered the aforementioned similar plea in case ***Veena @ Veena Devi v. State of Punjab (CRM-M-2206-2025, decided on 16.01.2025)***.

10. In the totality of circumstances, I am of the view that the petitioner may be granted one opportunity to appear before the trial Court so that the proceedings can recommence and continue smoothly. Accordingly, the plea of the petitioner is accepted to the extent of setting aside the impugned order dated 01.07.2025(Annexure P-3), whereby the petitioner was declared a ‘proclaimed person/offender.’ Petitioner is directed to be released on bail upon his surrender before the trial Court on or before 07.05.2026.

11. Petitioner shall also furnish fresh bail bonds/surety bonds to the satisfaction of the trial Court. In addition, petitioner shall submit a specific undertaking/affidavit affirming that he will regularly appear during the trial proceedings in the future, and that the proceedings shall not be delayed on account of his conduct.



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12. However, it is made clear that in case an FIR under Section 209 of the BNS (corresponding to Section 174-A IPC) has already been registered and the same is pending and not under challenge before this Court in the present proceedings, the instant order shall be deemed to be inoperative.

13. With aforementioned terms, present petition stands disposed of.

**(SANJAY VASHISTH)
JUDGE**

17.04.2026

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Whether speaking/reasoned: Yes/No
Whether Reportable: Yes/No